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REMARKS

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With the filing of the Request for Continued Examination (RCE), applicant requests that the amendment dated March 3, 2003 be entered and the arguments therein considered. Applicant also requests that the attached amendment, to add new Claims 22-25, be entered. By the present Amendment, Applicant amends the claims.

With respect to the two previous Advisory Actions, the Applicant maintains the argument that the cited prior art, in particular Whiteside (US 3,330,698), does not disclose, teach or suggest the claimed feature that each bladder is charged with air prior to use such that the amount of air in the bladder is not greater than 60% of the maximum contained volume of the bladder. Throughout Whiteside it teaches pressurizing bladders to provide support to an occupant. It is common sense that if a bladder is pressurized the pressure within the bladder will be greater than the surrounding atmospheric pressure, and the entire unrestrained volume of the bladder will be expanded. Nowhere within Whiteside does it teach a bladder which is not under pressure.

In column 2, lines 29-33, Whiteside states "wherein a rearward posture-support is attained by relatively high pressurization of compartments 18 until 22 in comparison to that of compartments 20 and 24". Thus, each of the compartments is under pressure. In column 3, lines 16-20, Whiteside states "the various compartments may be selectively pressurized and/or vented to attain the desired overall pattern of occupant-support....." Thus, it follows that there is some amount of pressure within the compartments/bladders to allow them to be vented. In Claim 1 of Whiteside it states that "the pressure-control means providing a pressurization of said compartments at individually selected amounts." This clearly indicates that the compartments are under pressure.

Further study of the Whiteside reference shows that it teaches an pneumatic (pressurized) seat for providing selected localized support. In order to accomplish this, the compartments/bladders are selectively pressurized to that amount of pressure needed to provide the desired support. Support could not be accomplished if the compartments were not pressurized.

In contrast, the purpose of the present invention is to not provide localized support, but to allow a user to be evenly supported over a large surface of the user's body, to prevent pressure sores. The unpressurized bladders conform to the user's body, which is not the case with a pressurized bladder as disclosed in White et al.

In this amendment the Applicant has added new Claims 22-25 which include the additional feature, which the Applicant considers also to be novel, of a seat support structure and backrest support structure formed as frames, wherein cushions are suspended either directly or indirectly from the frames. This feature is important in that if the partially inflated cushions were resting on a hard base, a user lying on the cushions would displace the air and would be lying directly on the hard base surface. The combination of partially inflated cushions and the suspension of the cushions provides unpressurized support of the user which molds to the user's body, thus preventing pressure sores. None of the cited prior art teach, disclose or suggest this feature.

In light of the foregoing response, all the outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome. Applicant respectfully submits that this application should now be in better condition for allowance and respectfully requests favorable consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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